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From Trump Tower to Trump White House: The Rhetoric of Donald Trump's 'Winning' Brand

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ABSTRACT

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Donald Trump's rhetoric of winners and losers has prompted dangerous division in the United States. It is well understood that Trump's divisive discourse appealed to white, blue-collar Americans who had become disillusioned with the political establishment. This study explores how Trump persuaded this audience by transitioning business communication principles, highlighted by his signature 'winners and losers' theme, into politics. Trump's use of the reality television show *The Apprentice* as a branding platform had the rhetorical effect that catapulted Trump's unique 'winning' brand back into the public's consciousness. While the principles of business rhetoric Trump used in *The Apprentice* were clearly transitioned to Twitter during Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, his tweets were unique in how they foregrounded the 'losers' he faced during the campaign. To illuminate Trump's branding strategy as both TV personality and political candidate, this analysis of Trump draws on Kenneth Burke's concept of consubstantiation and contemporary theories of business rhetoric, namely the idea of narrative-processing and its influence on consumers' connection with a brand. Because Trump constructs his brand with language that aims at restructuring America's social hierarchy, this study also uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to understand the implications of power for both his audience and his opponents. This study concludes that while Trump's winning brand identity contributed to him winning the presidency, it also promoted male dominance and exacerbated political division in the United States.

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Introduction

In the afternoon of May 26, 2016, Donald Trump excited a crowd of over 7,000 Republican voters in Billings, Montana with his signature line: "We're going to win so much, you're going to be so sick and tired of winning" (Lutey). Trump's rhetorical use of the 'winner' narrative first became apparent during his time as reality TV host on *The Apprentice,* but it quickly developed into a central motif during the campaign trail and in his formal campaign speeches. Greg Elmer and Paula Todd explain that "Trump's power" can be traced back to the "'anointing-of-winners' persona" (661). In several ways, Trump transitioned his winning message from the business setting to politics by leveraging Twitter. The work of Brian Ott and Greg Dickinson speaks to this transition and describes Trump's tweets as a means of building the Trump brand. Among other findings, their research shows that Trump used Twitter to "cultivate" the image of himself as the successful businessman, and that "branding" and promoting the Trump brand was one of the main rhetorical efforts Trump made to establish this image (66).

To illuminate Trump's branding strategy as both TV personality and political candidate, my analysis of Trump will draw on Kenneth Burke's concept of consubstantiation and contemporary theories of business rhetoric, namely the idea of "narrative-processing" and its influence on consumers' connection with a brand (Escalas 168). I argue here that Trump's unique presidential campaign rhetoric advances his brand, a brand historically built on stories of winners and losers in a capitalist system, through repeated categorization of his allies and his opponents in the same manner. Because Trump constructs his brand with language that aims at restructuring America's social hierarchy, I use critical discourse analysis (CDA) in this study. CDA methodology analyzes the relationship between language and power to understand the implications of ideology on oppressed groups (Wodak 2). CDA exposes how Trump's winning

brand promotes male dominance and exacerbates political division in the United States. Thus, Burke's theories of consubstantiation enable an understanding of Trump's intended winning identity and brand, while CDA critiques Trump's specific linguistic choices as he oppressively characterizes the 'losers' in the world. I examine Trump's NBC reality show, *The Apprentice,* as a brand-building rhetorical artifact and how he transitions the winning brand he established in this show into politics using his 2016 campaign tweets.

In my analysis of both of these artifacts – *The Apprentice* and Trump's 2016 campaign tweets – I will seek answers to the following research questions: How did Trump transition a business message of winning and losing into politics? What are the salient features of Trump's winning brand? And finally, what are the implications of Trump's winning brand with respect to political division in the United States? I begin my investigation of these questions in a literature review of Kenneth Burke's theories regarding identification and a discussion of how his theories intersect with business branding theories. Then an explanation of the research method is discussed: applying CDA to understand how Trump's powerful rhetoric is restructuring social hierarchies. After reviewing these theories and methods, I discuss the analysis and its findings. I conclude by reviewing how this analysis of Trump's brand contributes to a broader understanding of identification, namely how the use of "us vs. them" rhetoric exploits Burke's concepts of division in dangerous ways.

<div align="center">Business Rhetoric and Identification</div>

Rhetorical scholars have long explored persuasive appeals, and in the context of business and workplace settings, business rhetoric must adhere to certain capitalistic values that help the rhetor solve pressing exigencies in the market. In an effort to differentiate business rhetoric from other fields, Lamar Reinsch wrote that business communication "is communication intended to

help a business achieve a fundamental goal, to maximize shareholder wealth" (308). Annette Shelby references Reinsch in her research and elaborates further on disciplinary boundaries. Shelby asserts that business rhetoric is a more pragmatic (rather than theoretical) discipline which emphasizes the exchange of goods and merchandizing (253).

In more recent scholarship, Kristen Getchell and Paula Lentz define business communication as "transactional," "problem-solving," and "work-related," and that these key characteristics "highlight the distinct" nature of business communication "compared to the related fields of composition and technical communication" (2). These characteristics of business rhetoric seek to address a "distinct rhetorical exigence," which is to "solve business problems or achieve business goals" (2). Paula and Lentz differentiate these characteristics and exigencies of business rhetoric from other fields; they explain that compositional rhetoric emphasizes "the needs of the academy and students' need to succeed academically," and technical rhetoric emphasizes "technical or specialized subjects" (such as providing instructions or communicating via technology) (2). Business rhetoric, rather, is focused on the speaker's or writer's goals of "building relationships with customers, announcing a policy change, delivering bad news, (and) giving a report to shareholders" (2). In many ways, Trump's campaign speeches and his tweets represent a "report to shareholders." As I will explain later, Trump's numerous tweets regarding his poll numbers and political victories remind his voting populous (his political "shareholders") of his winning brand.

The use of narrative in business communication contributes to these capitalistic exigencies, and more specifically, the development of a business' brand and identity. Jennifer Escalas' research seeks to identify the impact of narratives on business branding. Through a series of experiments, conducting interventions of advertisements with narratives or stories on

test participants, she measures the impact of stories on a business consumer's perception of a business' brand. She concludes from the results that the stories provided "meaning" for the brand, and that the narratives made "some brands become more important and valuable than others to consumers, becoming connected to consumers' sense of self" (176). This study, which asks participants to indicate if they can "identify" with the brand on display, has intriguing connections to Kenneth Burke and his ideas regarding identification. Burke's theory of rhetoric illuminates the way a narrative like Trump's winner and loser message is helping consumers to connect and identify with his winning brand.

Burke's theories on identification, found most notably in *A Rhetoric of Motives,* are central to my analysis. Burke explains that rhetoric goes beyond merely an "address" or a "skill"; rather, he describes rhetoric as "a general body of identifications" (26). Burke elaborates further on this concept of identification by describing a person ("A") and their colleague ("B"):

> A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is identified with B… In being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another. (20-21)

The joining of "interests" between person A and their colleague B allows them to identify with one another. And this combination of individuals into one identity is what he says makes them "consubstantial." Burke introduces this idea of consubstantiality while also accounting for the traditional, neo-Aristotelian definition of rhetoric as the "art of persuasion" (46). However, he ultimately situates persuasion as an act by the rhetor that is only successful when their "address" is grounded in identifying with the audience (45). Burke states, "You persuade a man only

insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your way with his" (55). Identification and the resultant state of consubstantiality is a foundational premise of Burkean rhetoric.

The peculiar effect of Trump's winner and loser rhetoric on his audience can be understood as a form of consubstantiation. While Trump is separate and distinct from his audience, his ability to establish his winning identity and to encourage his audience to identify with him – Burke describes this as "acting-together" – enabled him to be consubstantial with them (Burke 21). Of this consubstantial state, Burke claims there is a "'universal' appeal in it" (58). The "universal" appeal of being associated with, or consubstantial with, Trump's winning brand is the joy and pleasure of being a winner and the fear of being called a loser. As Burke states, "'Belonging' in this sense is rhetorical," and belonging to a winning team is clearly rhetorical for Trump (28). In business, sports, television, and politics, this winning identity has the "universal appeal" that Burke spoke of and invites an emotional response in his audience, enrolling them into a shared identity of winners.

Trump's dichotomous worldview of humanity being made up winners and losers is also supported by Burke's ideas regarding "division." Burke stated, "Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division" (22). As one becomes identified with an audience, a clear division is made for a different identity. For Trump, concurrent to, or as Burke states, "compensatory" to, the creation of a winner is the creation of a loser. Trump's invitation to his audience to identify with his winning brand creates a common enemy or opponent: those who don't support or follow Trump, who are often categorized explicitly as losers. In Trump's rhetoric, because there are winners, there must also be losers. These losers are not only divided from Trump but become manipulated by his rhetoric

as he forcefully determines their identity. And when these so-called 'losers' also happen to be a different gender or a racial minority, Trump's winning brand prompts dangerous division as it can exclude, oppress, and limit the progress of equality and opportunity. One clear strength of using Burke as the theoretical basis for this study is that this concept of identification as "compensatory to division" can be found throughout *The Apprentice* and Trump's 2016 campaign Tweets.

Burke's theories of identification overlap with several elements of business communication research regarding branding and marketing. Escalas research states that brands help consumers "construct their self-identity" (170). As consumers are presented with brands that portray narratives or stories, the experience enhances the ability of the consumer to begin *identifying* with the brand. There is even terminology in the discipline of business communication that clearly intersects with Burke: "brand identity" is defined as "the degree to which the brand expresses and enhances consumers' identity" (Golob 54). Trump's rhetoric establishes his brand, a brand enhanced by his winner/loser language and characterized by transactional and problem-solving rhetoric, in NBC's *The Apprentice.* I analyze Seasons 1-6 of *The Apprentice*, excluding the remaining seasons, due to the significant content shift in *The Celebrity Apprentice*. I explore Trump's creation of his winning identity and brand in *The Apprentice,* as well as how he leverages this identity in his tweets.

Critical Discourse Analysis

While Burke's theories aid in understanding how Trump's business communication created a brand identity that divides winners from losers, CDA shows how Trump is building that brand linguistically, as well as the oppression his ideology imposes on women. As outlined by Thomas Huckin, CDA is a distinct methodological approach that gives "special attention" to

"underlying factors of ideology (and) power," and seeks to "show how people are manipulated" by certain elements of the rhetoric being studied (156). Huckin defines CDA as a methodology that is context sensitive; addresses contemporary societal issues; takes a clear ethical stand; and is ultimately accessible for the general public. Trump's use of presuppositions (such as "Crooked" Hillary Clinton), and his use of foregrounding and backgrounding (such as his foregrounding of others' losing characteristics), are categorized by Huckin and other CDA scholars as manipulative strategies that establish hegemony through the deceitful, elusive nature of the message.

CDA endorses Jürgen Habermas' claim that language is "a medium of domination and social force… (and) it serves to legitimize relations of organized power" (360). Trump's winner/loser rhetoric in his tweets reorganizes power by promising a winning status for blue-collar voters. Michael Sandel describes this rhetorical audience:

> Accustomed to dominating the social hierarchy, the white male working-class voters who supported Trump feel threatened by the prospect of becoming a minority … They feel that they, more than women or racial minorities, are the victims of discrimination. (18)

Sandel describes here how this audience of working-class voters felt "threatened" by the potential loss of their social power. This audience characterization is further justification for CDA as this methodology analyzes the intersection between power and language. As CDA and the coding done in this study will demonstrate, Trump emphasized his own winning characteristics while also foregrounding the losing characteristics of his opponents in the political establishment. It was the members of this political establishment that became the primary 'losers' in Trump's Twitter narrative. Trump's characterization – both of his winning self and audience, as well as the characterization of his opponents – is portrayed through specific

linguistic choices that this study sought to code. And the effect of this characterization is described by Liliana Mason when she states, "a candidate who picks up the banner of 'us versus them' and 'winning versus losing' is almost guaranteed to tap into a current of resentment and anger across racial, religious, and cultural lines" (3). My conclusion will follow the conventions of CDA in showing ethical implications of discourse, which for Trump's rhetoric entails how the resulting anger and resentment has fueled dangerous political division in the United States.

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The Apprentice Brand

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My objective in analyzing *The Apprentice* is to highlight Donald Trump's use of reality television as a branding platform that had the rhetorical effect that both catapulted Trump's unique 'winning' brand back into the public's consciousness and, simultaneously connected that brand with a story of capitalistic success. I begin with a brief discussion of the rhetorical audience and organize the ensuing analysis into three modes of persuasion and identification, each mode making a unique contribution to Trump's ability to establish a strong link of identification with his reality TV audience. The three modes of identification that appear most prevalent in *The Apprentice* include the visual, monological, and dialogical discourse. The visuals in *The Apprentice* establish the dichotomy of winners and losers and identify with the audience's deeply held belief in the American dream. The monologues in the show situate Trump as the master of financial winners in a way that is authentic and shareable. And Trump's dialogue with the contestants, particularly in the boardroom, portray business communication principles of goal-oriented and receiver-centric discourse. This analysis seeks to understand Trump's rhetorical history of establishing his winning brand, an understanding that will contextualize Trump's transition of business rhetoric into politics on Twitter.

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Visual Identification in The Apprentice

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In the opening minutes of the first episode, the visual elements immediately establish a worldview of winners and losers. The camera pans over New York City along the Hudson River, showing a symbol of American enterprise ("Meet the Billionaire"). This ariel image of New York City and its glittering skyscrapers convey a sense of awe in the audience as they take in this remarkable view of human achievement and reminds them of the pursuit of wealth and success. The lyrics to Frank Sinatra's song, "New York, New York", may have come to mind for the viewing audience, particularly the line, "If I can make it there I can make it anywhere." The rhetorical effect of these beautiful, high-angle shots of the New York City skyline, shots that are used frequently throughout *The Apprentice* in addition to these opening scenes of episode 1, help identify the audience visually and symbolically with Trump's intended reality of capitalistic success. In addition, various shot angles are taken of the Statue of Liberty, reinforcing the capitalistic exigence in his audience with the notion of the American Dream. Rather than being a selfish pursuit, the ambition to go from "rags to riches" is made into a noble endeavor for his audience by repeatedly displaying the Statue of Liberty in the opening scenes and throughout the show. The New York City visuals create a setting for Trump's *Apprentice* storyline, a story that allows his audience to become consubstantial with his brand as their interests to "make it here" in New York are joined with his interests to become a Wall-Street-winner (Sinatra).

The visual imagery continues in the opening moments of episode 1 to support Trump's message of hard work and the American capitalist dream. The camera pans to a homeless person sleeping on a park bench, identifying for the first time Trump's dichotomy between losers and winners. The homeless man represents visually the segment of Americans who are on the losing side of economic competition, and in Trump's social hierarchy, this man is a definitive 'loser.' Although the audience might momentarily feel sympathy towards this man, at the same time the

audience wants to avoid identifying their economic reality with his. This repelling identity is then contrasted quickly with another visual: a large, lavish mansion, so large that it takes a helicopter shot to fit the entirety of the building in the camera. The contrasting visuals engender a strong desire for the audience to identify their interest with Trump in making money and living in a lavish home. Trump's voice guides them through these visuals, and the audience is enticed to also be guided by Trump to avoid a homeless identity and embrace the wealthy identity of one who owns a New York mansion. Trump presented the audience with images and symbols of the American dream, a dream of "upward mobility", of hitting the jackpot and living like a king in Manhattan (Sandel 22). This transition from poverty to affluence is Trump's way of applying Burke's concepts regarding the "imagery of identification" (20). By showing the "before and after," Trump is demonstrating visually a "transformation" that his audience would like to identify with (Burke 20). All of these visuals show the audience that if they adopt the Trump brand, a strategy that leads to financial windfall, they can similarly receive the expected financial benefits.

As the mansion is viewed by the audience, Trump explains: "You can really hit it big." With language like "hitting it big," the jackpot scenario and the massive mansion are even more available to the audience if they are willing, as Trump has done, to "work hard." Those players who "get work done" and further the success of an organization create opportunities of social mobility, of a big payday or jackpot (Lawrence 74). Of course, in reality TV, players are used to create a sense of identification between audience and show; the setting of a gritty Manhattan and the hard work needed to succeed are presented to both players and simultaneously to the audience. The mansion visuals associated with this statement of "hitting it big" also denote that Trump's methods are incredibly lucky. This adds a level of mystique to Trump's brand identity,

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as the audience understands that this mansion visual is the combination of Trump's ingenuity, effort, and good fortune, making his brand even more appealing.

All of these visuals of wealth and the upward economic mobility inherent in the American dream are connected visually to Trump as the camera cuts to an expensive limousine driving down a busy New York City street. The next cut takes the audience inside the limousine to come face to face with Donald Trump, who sits in a comfortable seat as he speaks into the camera. The quick transition from these symbols of American enterprise – the New York City skyline, the Statue of Liberty, and a large mansion – to the visual of Donald Trump sitting in the back of his personal limousine converts the emotional awe that was inspired by the beautiful camera shots into a recognition that Trump has the ability to create those winning economic outcomes and tap into the American dream. Trump's mastery is emphasized further through additional visuals which are shown as he continues to speak: his Mara Lago Resort and the large Trump Tower in Las Vegas, Nevada. *The Apprentice* visuals enroll the audience into a belief that Trump's identity and brand have mastered this process of accruing wealth and he can mentor others in their efforts to be wealthy themselves.

Monological Identification in The Apprentice

Trump combines the visuals of New York City in the opening scenes of episode 1 with monological discourse, again reminding the audience of the American Dream as the opening shots continue. As Trump sits in his limousine, he says:

> My name is Donald Trump and I'm the largest real estate developer in New York. I own buildings all over the place, model agencies, the Miss Universe Pageant, jet liners, golf courses, casinos, and private resorts like Mara Lago, one of the most spectacular estates anywhere in the world… My company is bigger than it ever was, it's stronger than it ever

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was, and I'm having more fun than I ever had. I've mastered the art of the deal, and I've

turned the name Trump into the highest quality brand. And as the master, I want to pass

along my knowledge to someone else. I'm looking for the Apprentice. ("Meet the

Billionaire")

Trump's narrative emphasizes his personal affluence by touting his winning resume, from Trump

Tower to his luxurious resorts. As he sits in the back of his limousine, Trump's statement

highlights Holly Lawrence's claims that business rhetors should "package themselves as a

personal brand" by communicating their qualifications and past success (68). And after years of

working and mastering "the art of the deal," Trump's brand is "bigger," "stronger," and "more

fun" than ever. To a country reeling from the recent 9/11 recession, his self-acclaimed expertise

and resulting capital would have directly addressed a financial exigency in his audience. His

work ethic and acquisition of prominent symbols of wealth help to highlight the Trump winning

brand, but they also remind his audience of a deeply held belief, the American dream, the dream

of acquiring more wealth and more prestige within the perceived meritocracy. Trump's rhetorical

power can be seen in his ability to enroll his audience into the myth of the American dream

where "hard work, business mobility, and positive thinking" get equally big rewards (Sandel 47).

Trump's opening monologue included an American story of struggle and triumph over

adversity. Trump stated, "About 13 years ago, I was seriously in trouble. I was billions of dollars

in debt. But I fought back, and I won - big league. I used my brain, I used my negotiating skills,

and I worked it all out" ("Meet the Billionaire"). Trump's confession here of his personal

financial setbacks not only makes his win more impressive, but it also makes him a more

authentic storyteller. The American audience was likely surprised to hear that this wealthy

businessman, in the setting of a limousine, was once "billions of dollars in debt." However, that

feeling of surprise made Trump more relatable and genuine; he had to fight for his financial well-being in as authentic and real a way as other Americans. Janis Forman studied the role of authenticity in business communication and its effect on branding: "Authentic and fluent story-telling… can build trust in an organization, a general business objective, and can strengthen the brand" (90-91). Forman claims that authenticity is the foundation for all successful organizational storytelling (23). The authentic nature of this narrative allows Trump to "talk his (audience's) language" by identifying his "attitude" of hard work with the viewing audience (Burke 55). Trump follows this strategy of authenticity in the opening monologue by admitting to the audience his financial setbacks. This confession of loss in his pursuit for wealth built trust in his brand identity as he began the show.

Trump's brand identity is further established in *The Apprentice* with additional monologues that appear throughout each episode, which allow him to extend his expert financial advice beyond the contestants as he justifies his winning strategy to the viewing audience. At least once per episode, a brief clip is shown of Trump being interviewed, giving financial mentoring on a myriad of topics. These brief monologues situate Trump as the teacher speaking directly into the camera to the viewing audience, defining his identity in their eyes as the business master. His advice is always concise and quickly gets to his main point. And the positioning of bodies in the monologues is a precursor to Trump's discourse; not only is he situated as a business winner visually as he speaks to the viewing audience, but his message is fixated on winning and losing. In an episode where the characters tried to negotiate a winning deal, Trump stated, "Negotiation is a very, very delicate art. The big thing in negotiation is to try to and figure out your opponent. Otherwise, you're going to look like an idiot and lose big" ("Trading Places"). Although Trump's opening sentence in this monologue appears to treat

negotiation as "delicate," he immediately proceeds to make negotiation warlike and brutally competitive, with a clear strategy to win against an "opponent" and avoid losing "big." He shifts his metaphor from negotiation as an "art," to negotiation as a strategic competition. This is not only sudden and surprising, but his change in metaphors moves the audience from less aggressive behaviors to behaviors that are clearly aggressive. Trump's metaphors in this monologue establish the winning identity as the identity that is most competitive. Here we must come to "confront the implications of division," as Burke says, and understand that Trump's identification causes a divide that engenders a competitive, and sometimes even a hostile attitude between contestants in the show (22). This metaphoric transition – from negotiation as "art" to negotiation as a fierce competition – helps to justify Trump's aggressive rhetoric in his competitive message of winners and losers.

Trump continued his monologue interviews for the audience in each episode, repeatedly dividing the world into winners and losers in such a way that created a shared experience with the audience and Trump. During the second season of *The Apprentice,* Trump tells of individuals who don't wash their used cars before selling them, and states, "I've seen guys – they're selling cars that are dirty. And I say, 'That guy is a loser'" ("Trading Places"). And in a later episode, Trump used another monologue titled "Winning is Everything" to define what it means to be a winner. He stated, "There's no better feeling than being a winner. To be a winner, you have to think like a winner; you have to be positive, and you cannot stop" ("Intellectual Horsepower"). These examples and more established a strong sense of shareability with his winning brand. Rather than tutoring solely the contestants to win, Trump's pivot to tutor the audience branded him as an omniscient financial expert. It was this "personal involvement in the narrated world" during Trump's monologues, where the financial tutoring extended beyond the contestants and

into the audience, that created shareability with his winning brand-identity (Foss 308). As this study will explore further, Trump's 2016 campaign tweets established a similar pattern of Trump branding himself as the Wall-Street-winner who could offer advice to everyone on how to also be identified as a winner.

<center>*Dialogical Identification in* The Apprentice</center>

In addition to these brand-building monologues, Trump established his winning identity in *The Apprentice* through dialogical discourse, which began with his personal theme music. At the beginning of each episode, the contestants were called to an early morning meeting to speak with Trump and understand their upcoming task. They arrived at the designated location and waited for Trump to appear. The sound of royal trumpets announced the grand entrance of the most important character in the show: Donald Trump. While this musical touch feels overblown, its effect is clear in that it personified Trump as a king as he spoke with the contestants. Not only was he successful as a real estate developer, but his consistent ability to win built him into New York royalty in this business narrative. Melba Cuddy-Keane's work with auditory reception in narratives illustrates that recent studies in "auditory scene analysis might reveal that hearing plays a considerably more crucial role in narrative than has been thought" (396). Cuddy-Keane explains further: "part of the crucial work of hearing is perceiving, or trying to perceive, relationships" (388). The relationship between Trump and the contestants in these scenes was made clear through the music played when his character entered the camera's view; the applicants are his royal subjects, and he rules as king. In episode 9 of season 4, Alla alludes to this perceived relationship by stating, "Trump to me is power, and to me he is the king of New York" ("One Hit Blunder"). The consistency and repetition of this simple rhetorical strategy of

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intentional, regal music as he engages in dialogue with the contestants at the beginning of the episodes engenders a perception of Trump's identity as the king of winners.

Trump's dialogue with the contestants fostered his identity as a balanced, successful business leader, and he accomplished this by vacillating between communicating high praise and high expectations. When Trump met the contestants in season 1, episode 1, he approached each person and shook their hand with a smile. The camera cut to one of the contestants who stated, "That was one of the biggest moments of my life, shaking that man's hand. He is my mentor." ("Meet the Billionaire"). But when Trump spoke with the contestants in the boardroom, he became notorious for giving crushing feedback. In season 3, episode 11, Trump bitterly told the contestant he was firing: "you hang out with losers, you become a loser" ("The Pie's the Limit"). Trump is making this contestant consubstantial with other losers simply because of their proximity – "you hang out" – with other losing contestants. This negative identity attached to contestants would then be contrasted again with the lavish rewards offered to winning teams, resulting in the contestants thanking him for his benevolence. This vacillation in his communication between a high amount of praise for the contestants and his high expectations for them to win ultimately portrayed Trump throughout the show as a well-rounded leader who demanded accountability and success. This also highlights what some business communication scholars call the "two overarching principles" of business rhetoric: being "goals-oriented" while also being "receiver-centric" (Rawlins 33). The term "goals-oriented" is a characteristic defined by a focus on what needs to be "accomplished," while "receiver-centric" is focused on "relationships" (Rawlins 34). Trump's kind and charitable discourse towards the contestants demonstrates his business need to be receiver-centric, while his harsh and demanding tones to get results show he is goals-oriented. The resultant appeal for the audience is a balanced leader

who gets results from his organization, an identity that Trump portrayed later in his presidential campaign tweets through his identity of being a goal-oriented, receiver-centric candidate.

The rewards for winning teams in *The Apprentice,* and the dialogical patterns associated with these events, perpetuated Trump's winning brand by empowering an intense desire for winning outcomes. Each episode offers a segment where Trump and his business associates present the winning team with an exotic reward, such as a brief trip on a private yacht or an extravagant dinner with a celebrity. Another reward for one of the winning teams was to have a tour of Yankee Stadium in New York from the owner of the New York Yankees, George Steinbrenner. While these events may not typify a *kernel* event in this business narrative, or a "critical point in the narrative that force movement in particular directions," these *satellite* events do indeed "affect the form of the narrative and the form's rhetorical effects" (Foss 313). The repetition in the reward pattern perpetuated the show's key rhetorical theme that winning is most desirable. Burke claims that often the "repetition and… daily reinforcement" of a "body of identifications", like the reward pattern in *The Apprentice,* leads to a greater level of "convincingness" in the rhetoric, even more than an "exceptional rhetorical skill" (26). In addition, what happened in each of the rewards – the events themselves – provide further rhetorical work on the audience to strengthen Trump's winning brand in the show.

In the aforementioned Yankee stadium visit, Trump introduced George Steinbrenner by saying, "You talk about winners; this guy is a winner… and he's been winning ever since (he bought the Yankees)" ("Trading Places"). Steinbrenner proceeded to give the contestants advice and shared what it took for him to build a team that could win the World Series. After the discussion they went to the owner's box, and the contestant Nick stated, "The owner's box is unbelievable. Best seat in the house, that not everyone gets to see except winners." As they left

Yankee stadium together, Trump turned to the contestants and said, "Keep winning." Trump's dialogue with the contestants, after they had just experienced a Trump win, reinforces their drive and desire to win. This reward is one of many in the show, satellite events in the broader business narrative, which gave the contestants and the viewing audience a greater desire to find winning outcomes.

Trump's identity as the master of winners was perhaps most apparent in *The Apprentice* when he engaged in dialogue with the contestants in the boardroom, a setting used strategically to justify Trump's incivility in his rhetoric. At the end of each episode, Trump invited the losing team to come to the boardroom, where at least one of the candidates was fired. Scholar Chit Cheung Matthew Sung's writing on gender and masculinity explores the intense masculinity that burgeons in *The Apprentice* boardroom. Sung explains that the boardroom setting justifies Trump's aggressive behavior, characterized by "the frequent use of interruptions… the giving of cruel criticisms and negative evaluations without mitigation, and his dominance of the speaking floor" (294). Sung claims that the outcome of the boardroom setting, illustrated by a battered and bruised team with a team member lost in the wake, is somehow acceptable. The masculinity inherent in this business space allowed Trump to act rash, yet this was "considered normative" and his choices "justified" (294).

Trump was even able to bend rules and define morality in the boardroom to find the right contestant to win. Michael in season 3 explained, "There are no rules in Trump's boardroom" ("Trouble is Brewing"). Trump showed that precedent and rules matter very little to him: he can fire more than one person, he can fire someone without consulting his associates, and he can even fire someone that was previously promised exemption. Trump does this to show he is more than the person who crowns the winner; he is the one who carves the path to winning, and he sets

his own rules in the boardroom for how to obtain that outcome. Trump's intense, masculine persona in the dim lights of the boardroom, where he dominated both the screen and the screen time, enabled him to be perceived as a decisive, strong leader who demanded wins and berated losses. To the contestant Ivana, Trump interrupted her and said, "I don't want to take a chance on somebody who loses all the time… Frankly, you've lost too much. Ivana, you're fired." ("Sweet and Lowdown"). Sung's research on the masculinity exhibited in the boardroom, proven by these interruptions, criticism, and insults, was justified and even enjoyed because of the masculinity inherent in the setting of a business boardroom.

The Apprentice solidified Trump's intended identity and brand as the ultimate financial winner. Trump's visuals, his monological discourse, and his dialogical discourse created a shared experience between the viewing audience and the contestants as they sought to win and be tutored by Trump. I argue that these elements of the show both portrayed and solidified Trump's identity and encouraged the viewing audience to become consubstantial with Trump's winning brand. This successful business identification was critical to Trump's path to politics, and I will explore how he used Twitter to transition this identity into politics during his 2016 campaign.

<div align="center">Trump's 'Loser' Tweets</div>

Trump's Twitter strategy, in particular his use of Twitter on the campaign trail, clearly draws from earlier branding strategies deployed during his time on *The Apprentice*. CDA analysis provides evidence of this rhetorical transition. The tweets chosen for this CDA analysis were taken from Trump's Twitter account, @realDonaldTrump, and from *Trump Twitter Archive* (which became the only source for accessing Trump's tweets when Trump's Twitter account was permanently suspended on January 8th, 2021). The Twitter corpus for this study begins on June 15, 2015 when Trump publicly announced he was running for President and ends on November

8, 2016 when he won the election. I argue that the entirety of this corpus is essential to answering the research question regarding the transition of Trump's winning brand into politics. As will be discussed, there were specific instances early in his campaign when Trump echoed similar sentiments and linguistic choices that were employed in *The Apprentice,* and his unique emphasis on 'loser' opponents near the end of the campaign justify these tweets also being included in the analysis.

During his campaign, Trump tweeted 7,805 times. Analyzing nearly 8,000 of Trump's tweets presented challenges due to the high volume of tweets; this research required significant time and organization to come to clear, concise conclusions in the coding analysis. However, the shorter length of tweets (140-character limit in this timeframe) nuances the larger number of overall tweets and made this larger corpus manageable. CDA is context-sensitive, and while this research is limited by not discussing each context for every tweet, this study will overtly situate Trump's tweets in the context of *The Apprentice* and the business rhetoric Trump used in the reality TV show to establish his winning brand.

Once the corpus was assembled, I followed the conventions of CDA and engaged in multiple readings of the text. Upon the second reading of the text, I began coding to identify the salient features of Trump's win/lose rhetoric in his tweets. I began the coding process by doing a lexical search of the 7,805 campaign tweets for 'win' or 'lose' words (such as win, won, lead, lose, lost, failure, etc.). The 845 tweets that contained a win/lose word became the focus of additional coding analysis. In reviewing this sub-corpus, I discovered that Trump identified specific individuals as 'losers' and created a coding category dedicated to code each person Trump labeled a 'loser' in his campaign tweets. Additional coding categories I selected expose how frequently Trump emphasized: 1. His own winning characteristics, or 2. The losing

characteristics of his opponents, as well as when he suppressed: 3. His losing characteristics, or

4. The winning characteristics of his opponents. CDA scholar, Teun A. van Dijk, described these

"4 moves" in communication as "the ideological square," a "strategy of positive self-

preservation… and its outgroup corollary, 'negative other-presentation'" (245). Other coding

categories included: the characteristics of a winner, and the characteristics of a loser. I conducted

a third reading of the tweets to ensure my coding analysis with these selected categories was

accurate and comprehensive.

My objective in this CDA analysis is to explore how Trump used Twitter to pivot his

business brand-identity established during *The Apprentice* from reality TV into politics, and how

his emphasis and specificity on his 'loser' opponents makes his rhetoric uniquely divisive. While

The Apprentice may have had brief instances of emphasis on losers, such as the camera shot of

the homeless man in the opening scene of the show or a loser getting fired in the boardroom,

these feel momentary as the show emphasized Trump's winning characteristics and the path of

contestants to win and receive rewards for their hard work. As will be discussed both

qualitatively and quantitively, Trump's tweets build up his identity in a similar way, but his

Twitter rhetoric is overflowing with visceral attacks on individuals as he calls them a 'loser,' a

'phony,' or a 'dummy', among other names, a practice that sets him apart from other political

candidates. This practice of humiliating 'loser' opponents joined Trump's interests with an

audience who had felt humiliated by the political establishment (Burke 20). This caustic rhetoric

establishes enemies and division, restructures social hierarchies in the pursuit of putting the

white, blue-collar American worker on top.

Transitioning the Apprentice *Brand to Twitter*

Trump's tweets, in a similar way as *The Apprentice* monologues, identify and divide the world into winners and losers through aggressive, blunt messaging. Early on in his campaign on June 27, 2015, Trump tweeted, "When somebody challenges you unfairly, fight back - be brutal, be tough - don't take it. It is always important to WIN!" (@realDonaldTrump). That same day he added in another tweet, "When you are in a war, or even a battle, losing is not an option!" (@realDonaldTrump). This emphasis on effort and being "tough" in order to win and avoid losing hearkens back to the appeal of the American Dream in Trump's *Apprentice* business rhetoric. In addition, these short, punchy statements about winning and losing offer a similar pattern as his regular monologues in the show. This is what made Trump the "blunt speaking champion of the blue-collar American" and was appealing for an audience who resisted political correctness in the pursuit of unapologetic directness (Lombardo). Not only did his bluntness appeal to his rhetorical audience, but it demonstrates a foundational principle of business communication that Trump portrayed most notably in his brief monologues: conciseness. Trump's monologue-esque tweets highlight what Jacob Rawlins said when he explained that the business rhetor should "deliver all the needed information in as efficient a message" as possible, and how being "concise" is one of the core competencies of business rhetoric (36). Twitter as a medium (allowing for only 140 characters or less) along with Trump's overtly blunt messaging, contributed to a level of conciseness here that helped him identify with his audience and transition his business brand into politics.

The unique boardroom setting in *The Apprentice* gave Trump certain affordances which relate, in many ways, to the possibilities allowed on Twitter. The backdrop of the boardroom justified Trump in being aggressive and hostile, and even allowed him to bend the rules of morality. In many ways, Twitter became a comparable setting for Trump during the 2016

election, with even greater toxicity and inappropriateness. Included in Forbes' top 10 list of Trump's "Most Offensive Tweets," Trump's belligerent tone regarding Karl Rove in this tweet portrayed Trump as a winner: "Every Poll has me winning BIG. If you listen to dopey Karl Rove, a Trump hater, on @oreillyfactor, you would think I'm doing poorly" (Forbes). The opening sentence here about "winning BIG" echoes the self-aggrandizement of Trump's personal brand that he established in *The Apprentice.* And his overt, aggressive name calling – such as "dopey" and "Trump hater" – also reiterates the linguistic affordances Trump was allowed in the boardroom. Concerning Twitter, Ott and Dickinson, write, "As a mode of communication, Twitter is defined by three key features: simplicity, impulsivity, and incivility" (61). Trump displayed all three of these features in a litany of tweets, particularly incivility. "Dopey Karl Rove" was just one of his many nicknames, and the numerous instances of offensive name-calling by Trump show the development of his rhetoric on Twitter as he added extra emphasis to the losers in his win/lose rhetoric. The nicknames of "Crooked Hillary," "Little Michael Bloomberg," "Crazy Bernie Sanders," and "Lyin' Ted Cruz" demonstrate this added 'loser' emphasis and are somehow justified by his rhetorical audience because they fit the conventions of incivility inherent to Twitter. Specifically, Trump's incivility towards Hillary Clinton and his linguistic choice of the presupposition "Crooked" forces upon her a losing identity and establishes a perceived reality where women are structured beneath the dominant male in Trump's ideal social hierarchy.

Trump became the definition of a Wall-Street-winner in *The Apprentice* in part because his character was portrayed as an omnipotent negotiator, an identical characteristic on display in his tweets. Soon after his formal announcement to run for the presidency, Trump tweeted: "Who would you rather have negotiating for the U.S. against Putin, Iran, China, etc., Donald Trump or

Hillary? Is there even a little doubt?" (@realDonaldTrump). He posits this leading question

("who would you rather have negotiating…") to manipulate his audience into identifying him as

the master negotiator over a weaker woman. His second question reinforces his male dominance:

"Is there even a little doubt?" His addition of the word "little" minimizes even the possibility of

doubt in deciding between him and Hillary. And by positioning "little" within yet another

leading question, Trump is creating a "general body of identifications" for his business

negotiation skills that made him an easy choice over his female opponent (Burke 26). By

drawing on the credibility he built in *The Apprentice* as one who can negotiate a win in every

deal, Trump was able to make the claim in his tweets that he can apply that business brand in

political negotiations for the success of his rhetorical audience.

Trump also transitioned his goal-oriented business discourse in *The Apprentice* to Twitter

by magnifying his apparent "Midas touch" with poll numbers. Hundreds of Trump's tweets in

the 17 months of his campaign constituted poll numbers, repeatedly demonstrating his business-

like goal to raise percentages and outcomes. All of his commentary on the polls emphasized his

role as the candidate who was always winning, always leading, and the foregone conclusion to

win the presidency in 2016. He tweeted, "I am in first place by a lot in all polls," "Record setting

African American (25%) and Hispanic (poll) numbers (31%)," and a retweet stating Trump

"came out as the clear winner in the polls yet again!" (@realDonaldTrump). Trump's fixation on

numerical comparisons with competitors was not a new obsession; in season 3 of *The*

Apprentice, Trump compared his financial success to the entire net worth of Pontiac Corporation

("A Lonely Drive"). He continued this numerical obsession with the consistent barrage of poll

numbers in his tweets, essentially providing a "shareholder report" for voters that his character

can and will win the presidency in this Twitter narrative. For an audience who felt left behind by

the political establishment, this business mogul's surprising success rate in the polls was appealing.

While Trump often touted his own successes in his tweets, he also furiously retweeted thousands of messages from his audience praising his successes, demonstrating the business communication principle of receiver-centric rhetoric. The rhetorical effect of these retweets shows Trump's relationship with potential voters, and instead of Trump claiming the greatness of his character in the Twitter story, having someone else claim his wonderful qualities portrays Trump as more authentic. Trump retweeted messages such as, "He knows how to create wealth," "Donald Trump is a no-nonsense billionaire businessman," and "Trump (has a) 96% success rate in business" (@realDonaldTrump). One retweet claimed that "no one knows more about business and the economy" than Trump himself (@realDonaldTrump). Regarding these examples emphasizing Trump's winning character and his outlandish, even questionable, success rate in business, Trump stated "My history shows I will never disappoint" (@realDonaldTrump). These retweets demonstrate anecdotally how his candidacy is being received by the public and portrays to his rhetorical audience that he is not only goals-oriented, but he is also receiver-centric. Applying business communication principles to bolster his winning brand with others' comments began most notably in *The Apprentice*. The numerous clips of contestants gushing over Trump's wealth, success, and intelligence are found echoing in the sentiment established in Trump's retweets.

If Trump saw a poll that didn't align with his winning brand, he challenged the accuracy of the poll to emphasize political opponents as 'losers.' Dozens of his campaign tweets bombastically criticized various surveys and poll numbers that showed other contestants as the frontrunner or ahead of Trump. In *The Apprentice*, Trump could dictate the discourse provided to

his audience by suggesting film content cuts, but his Twitter discourse needed to evolve because he couldn't cut opposing, negative discourse. As can be observed in numerous examples, Trump resorts to defending himself by emphasizing how these "Trump haters" are losers, and how the polls are "fictitious", "fluke(s)", or "phony" (@realDonaldTrump). Any poll number that didn't fit with his winning identity was criticized and made moot in Trump's reality. In one retweet, Trump messaged that "@CNBC is trying to drive down poll numbers to install (Ben Carson) … Win Don Win!" (@realDonaldTrump). In this specific example, Trump situates Ben Carson as a fake winner. This foregrounding of a false, faulty winner reinforces Trump's reality: a social hierarchy where the white working class, represented by Trump, claim the true winning outcomes.

A Quantitative Look at Trump's Unique 'Loser' Foregrounding

The transition of Trump's rhetorical tactics used in *The Apprentice,* along with his added emphasis of the 'losers' characterized throughout his campaign tweets, are affirmed and nuanced further with quantitative measurements and coding analysis. The sheer volume of tweets during his campaign was unprecedented, with a grand total of 7,805 tweets, an average of over 15 tweets published every day of his campaign (Brown). Peter Francia's research found that "Twitter delivered the equivalent of $402 million in free attention for Trump as compared to $166 million for Clinton" (9). This free attention allowed Trump to tweet hundreds of messages to millions of people, explicitly defining his winning team in his campaign narrative while simultaneously telling the repeated story of the 'losers' who opposed him. Again, my lexical search revealed that 845 tweets contained a 'win' or 'lose' word (such as win, won, lead, lose, lost, failure, etc.). Thus, nearly 11% of all tweets in this timeframe contains a win/lose word. Table 1 provides a relative comparison to Trump's use of other words:

Table 1: Word Groupings Within Trump's 2016 Campaign Tweets			
	Word Grouping	Frequency (Percent of Tweets Which Include these Words)	Number of Tweets
1.	Win/Lose words	10.82%	845
2.	Economy words	4.59%	358
3.	Immigration words	3.96%	309

As table 1 shows, I created other word groupings associated with important topics in the 2016 election and compared those against Trump's win/lose tweets. Interestingly, economy words (such as economy, wages, jobs, etc.) only appeared in 4.59% of Trump's 2016 campaign tweets (358 tweets), and immigration words (such as wall, immigrant, aliens, illegals, etc.) only appeared in 3.96% of the tweets (309 tweets). In contrast, 10.82% of Donald Trump's 2016 campaign tweets (845 tweets) contain a win or lose word. These emotionally charged words, used to invite the audience to identify with Trump's winning identity and brand, are used more frequently in his tweets than these other word groupings which make logical claims about political policies. This provides quantitative evidence that Trump's Twitter rhetoric is making more of an emotional appeal to a winning identity rather than a logical appeal about policy. By putting policy in the background, his rhetoric about winning has a heightened emotional impact.

The emotional appeal of Trump's winner/loser message confronts "the implications of division" for U.S. politics (Burke 22). As scholar Lilliana Mason said, Trump is fueling "identity politics" that move beyond merely disagreements in policy and emphasizes an "us vs. them" mentality (2). She shares that the "Trump phenomenon is particularly rooted in identity," and it can be observed here that his rhetoric "is consistent in its most important message: we will win" (2). Mason's research also illuminates how Trump's tactic of backgrounding his positions regarding policy ultimately manipulated his audience to avoid thinking critically about his

practical agenda and instead become emotionally involved in his message and identity as they migrate towards partisanship. Mason shows that "every year, partisanship trumps policy positions in determining our feeling toward the two parties (Republican or Democrat)" (52). Trump's lack of emphasis on policy and the subsequent over-emphasis on partisanship loyalty in the pursuit of political winning created a crucible of division in United States politics and exacerbated the "us vs. them" mentality.

While Twitter mirrored Trump's focus on winners and losers from *The Apprentice,* coding analysis demonstrates that Twitter magnified the emphasis on 'losers' significantly. Table 2 shows the outcomes of coding Trump's emphasis on his own 'winning' characterization and opponents' 'losing' characterization. Again, the tweets analyzed with these codes were the 845 tweets in Trump's 2016 campaign that included a win/lose word:

Table 2: "Us vs. Them" Emphasis in Trump's Win/Lose Campaign Tweets		
Total Tweets That Include "Ideological Square" Communication		347
	Communication Type Codes	Number of Tweets
1.	Emphasizing Opponents' Losing Characteristics	178
2.	Emphasizing Trump's Winning Characteristics	78
3.	Suppressing Trump's Losing Characteristics	66
4.	Suppressing Opponents' Winning Characteristics	25

Table 2 shows the dominant element of the ideological square is clearly the emphasis on Trump's opponents' losing characteristics, constituting more than the other three categories combined. At the very least, this dominant element of the ideological square shows that Trump was no stranger to mudslinging during his campaign. But these tweets likely mean more than typical, political mudslinging; they showcase Trump's worldview, a perspective that reiterates his superiority to others by degrading their identity. There is a shift, however, from *The Apprentice* narrative to the Twitter narrative: rather than foregrounding his own winning

characteristics as he did in *The Apprentice*, Trump foregrounds his opponents' losing characteristics. This change in emphasis was effective at responding to the exigence inherent in his audience; Michael Sandel explains that "Trump was elected by tapping a wellspring of anxieties, frustrations, and legitimate grievances to which the mainstream parties had no compelling answer" (17-18). This transition from Trump's personal aggrandizement to his negative portrayal of his opponents is, in part, because he was making a direct appeal to the anxieties and frustrations of white, blue-collar, working class Americans. In particular, Trump's populist portrayal of the political establishment, with Hillary Clinton as the personification of that establishment, caused his audience to question power inherited by career politicians. Although Trump is somewhat backgrounded as he does this in his tweets, his winning brand became all the more appealing as his audience realized and revolted at the notion of current political players using their power in "crooked" ways, as Trump accused Hillary of doing relentlessly in his tweets.

Trump's consistent effort in his tweets to emphasize others' losing characteristics was rarely a general sentiment; Trump's uniqueness as a political candidate is manifest in how painfully specific he was, categorizing people by name as "losers," "dummys," and "fools," among other labels. Each individual that Trump explicitly called a loser was coded in this segment of Trump's 2016 campaign tweets. It should be noted that both individuals and entities (such as *The New York Times*, Macy's, etc.) were coded when they were called a loser, and there were a total of 64 specific individuals or entities coded. Table 3 shows the 5 individuals who were most frequently coded in this corpus:

Table 3: Specific 'Losers' in Trump's Win/Lose Campaign Tweets		
	Name Codes	Number of Tweets
1.	Hillary Clinton	92
2.	Ted Cruz	33
3.	Mitt Romney	28
4.	Jeb Bush	24
5.	Karl Rove	18

It is no surprise that Hillary Clinton was the ultimate losing character in Trump's 2016 campaign tweets. Known as "Crooked Hillary" in this story, Hillary Clinton was called a loser after debates, after the release of poll results, and after news outlets reported her email scandal just weeks before the November election. All of these represented opportunities for Trump to label her as a loser, adding up to 92 times in his 2016 campaign. While some may have identified Hillary Clinton as a "beacon of hope for women," Trump's rhetoric adamantly portrays a social reality where men continue to dominate, and women have diminished opportunities (Svoboda). His appeals to the exigence inherent in blue collar Americans led to his winning rhetoric for the white male worker. And Trump's repeated declaration of "I will beat Hillary" not only reinforces his winner/loser theme, but also establishes a physical dominance; rather than merely saying he will win, the use of "beat" has violent connotations, emphasizing that Trump will win in a physical contest, further entrenching the idea of male dominance for his audience.

Trump's strongest GOP primary opponent, Ted Cruz, was also frequently denounced as a loser. Even when Ted Cruz won the Iowa caucuses, Trump claimed that "Lyin Ted Cruz" "stole" the votes (@realDonaldTrump). Not only did Trump claim this opponent to be fraudulent, but he also associated that fraudulence with Cruz' status as an immigrant born in Canada. In one tweet, Trump said, "Ted Cruz is totally unelectable, if he even gets to run (born in Canada). Will loose [*sic*] big to Hillary" (@realDonaldTrump). Trump's foregrounding of Cruz' place of birth

outside of the United States not only made him unelectable in Trump's rhetorical reality, but it also associates his immigrant status with the outcome of losing. This characterization of Cruz, a characterization that Trump displayed 33 times during his 2016 campaign, further foregrounded the losing attributes of his opponents.

These examples and others demonstrate that Trump's dominant element of the ideological square – emphasizing his opponents' losing characteristics – led to a large number of individuals being trampled on by his rhetoric. Huckin explains that "labels" as well as "presuppositions" are used to manipulate an audience to legitimize a rhetor's reality; in many ways, these names that Trump calls his opponents can be analyzed as presuppositions (83). Through repetition, Trump implies that adjectives like "Crooked" should be taken for granted, "as if there were no alternative," and his audience has difficulty challenging the veracity of his name-calling (Huckin 82). It also eliminates the other identification options in his narrative; Clinton and these other opponents are definitive losers in his story, and because of his name-calling, there is no possible nuance to that characterization. In this way, these simple presuppositions allow Trump to exercise power over his audience by narrowly defining the losing characters in his story, forcing a reality where he is the only winner left standing.

I argue that Trump's specificity in his visceral attacks on political opponents makes his rhetoric unique and adds a *pathetic* appeal for his audience. For a demographic who were disillusioned by the political establishment, who felt left behind as economic opportunities were offered to other groups, and whose frustrations were being bottled up as they felt unable to express those frustrations due to political correctness, Trump's acerbic tweets regarding the character of individual candidates directly addressed their exigence. In particular, the emotion of humiliation was at the heart of Trump's appeals as he ran for President. Hilary Clinton's claim

that half of Donald Trump's supporters belong in a "basket of deplorables" created a sense of humiliation for Trump's audience, and justified his blatant humiliation of her as he labeled her a 'loser' 92 times (Merica). While Clinton's comments became a detriment in her campaign (she later expressed regret in an official statement for this comment), Trump's humiliation of his opponents was an asset as it tapped into and released the frustration pent up in his rhetorical audience.

Trump's unique emphasis on the losing characteristics of political opponents in his tweets is based primarily on the characterization of these opponents as dishonest. Table 4 shows the character traits Trump focused on the most. "Rigged," "phony," and "crooked" are just a few of the words that prompted a code for "Corruption/lies." Polls showing opponents as winners were, according to Trump, the product of a corrupt system or a deceitful news source. The frequency of this code is significant, as it is more than double the amount coded for the second highest losing characteristic. It is apparent that Trump is at best making a populist push here to question the power of the political establishment in America, and at worst he is seeking to undermine the credibility of the democratic process. By characterizing his opponents as not only losers, but as dishonest people, he is once again "tapping" into the frustrations and anxieties inherent in many individuals in his audience (Sandel 17). This allows Trump to construct a reality where he is the honest winner with a winning track record and a platinum brand.

Table 4: Characteristics of a 'Loser' in Trump's Win/Lose Campaign Tweets		
	Characteristic Codes	# of Tweets
1.	Corruption/Lies	103
2.	Stupidity	46
3.	Business Failure	34
4.	Lost political races	31
5.	Weak	15

It should also be noted that the third highest frequency code portraying the identity of a loser in Trump's story is "business failure." If a company or an individual who opposed Trump was losing money, downsizing, or decreasing in stock value, Trump was quick to magnify these shortcomings in their characterization. *The Apprentice* identity of Trump as someone one who could judge a business success from a business failure, an identity that branded him as the ultimate Wall-Street-winner, was clearly transitioned into the political arena in these tweets through his labeling business failures as 'losers.'

Although secondary in emphasis, Trump's tweets to portray his own winning brand identity still carried over from *The Apprentice* to his tweets as he magnified his political and business track record. As table 5 details, Trump was obsessed with political victories as an indicator of his winning character. Upon learning that he won a state in the GOP Primaries, Trump promptly tweeted his win to the masses. He did this frequently enough that it became clear in the coding process: Trump would not let his wins go unnoticed. And in anticipation of the general election, Trump tweeted repeatedly about his previous wins to remind his audience of his political resume. One example of this was after Paul Ryan congratulated Trump on his GOP nomination and stated that Trump inherited something very special: the Republican Party nomination. Trump tweeted: "I didn't inherit it, I won it with millions of voters!" (@realDonaldTrump). Rather than being acted upon and inheriting something, Trump employed the hard work he promoted so aggressively in *The Apprentice* to win this nomination on his own accord. In addition to the prominence of political victories in Trump's rhetoric, business success was yet again an emphasis in his winning character. Frequent retweets of individuals who

pointed to Trump's business success rate characterized him as the ultimate example of winning. For his blue-collar audience who were seeking to regain financial footing relative to women, immigrants, and minorities, the repeated reference to the winning characteristic of financial success addressed their economic exigence.

Table 5: Characteristics of a 'Winner' in Trump's Win/Lose Campaign Tweets		
	Characteristic Codes	# of Tweets
1.	Political victory	70
2.	Large crowds	13
3.	Business success	11
4.	Toughness & strength	10
5.	Intelligence	8

In summary, this CDA study analyzed how Trump transitioned his business brand from *The Apprentice* to his Twitter rhetoric. My quantitative coding of Trump's tweets explored the linguistic choices Trump made to enroll his audience in his winning identity. And throughout this Twitter study, the implications of Trump's divisive, win/lose rhetoric were discussed: the impact of this winner/loser message on maintaining the marginalization of women and immigrants and the regaining status for white, working class men. This analysis demonstrates that Trump's winner/loser message is a prominent feature of his campaign tweets, that Trump's dominant emphasis in his tweets is the losing characteristics of his opponents, and that Trump's winning business communication continued to play an important role in his brand identity as a political candidate.

Conclusion

Ott and Dickinson write of Donald Trump's Reagan-esque goal to make America great again: "Looking at and listening to Trump, his followers participated in a shared fantasy, an alternate image of themselves, one in which they, like Trump, were an American success story"

(44). Trump's invites his audience to enroll in an identity of success by employing his rhetorical theme of winners and losers, a message he branded in *The Apprentice* and implemented on Twitter. His application of business communication through the narrative-processing of his winner narrative established himself repeatedly as the only candidate with credibility to bring success to America. This also allowed him to transition his winning brand from reality TV into politics. His business brand also helped him appeal to the blue-collar audience of voters who sought his financial ethos to bring about a win. The implications of this are numerous. On one hand, his story has proven to be persuasive as it helped gain a strong enough voting populous to win the presidency in 2016. While this analysis does show that Trump did much to infuriate his opponents by emphasizing their losing characteristics, it is also clear from the election results that he gained a significant following and was successful in many ways. The implication that is most concerning, however, that stems from his 'winning' rhetoric is the division this created among the American people. At its very core, identification – a theory that is fundamental to understanding the identity of Trump's winning brand – prompts division. As Burke states: "To begin with 'identification' is, by the same token, though roundabout, to confront the implications of *division*" (22). To identify with something or someone denotes that one must be separated, or divided, from that thing or individual. "If men were not apart from one another," writes Burke, "there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity" (22).

Burke writes that a potential "disease" of identification is "war," or a "perversion of communion" (22). Rather than uniting Americans, Trump's winning identity and brand inspires uniting amongst partisan lines to fight against the opposing party. Not only is this widening the partisan divide, but Trump's intended winners in his rhetoric frequently oppresses women and minorities. To use a business term, the "opportunity cost" of Trump reiterating his winner/loser

rhetoric, a message that elevates the social standing of the white, working class American, is a number of opportunities lost for a variety of oppressed groups. Progress towards greater equality and justice for these groups are stunted when Trump calls them losers in the pursuit of a personal, political win. Trump's claims that he and his voting base are winners, and these opponents are losers, is what has led to the current political moment of division and an intensifying war of words. Four years after being elected President of the United States, Donald Trump was accused of inciting a violent mob at the United States capitol, a mob displayed in countless photos as primarily white, and including white supremacist groups. And the accusation of inciting this insurrection of mainly white followers was often accompanied with evidence in the form of a Trump tweet. This is one example of how public discourse in American politics is currently fueled by rage on both sides of the partisan divide. Ott and Dickinson assert that "rage" is the emotion "at the heart of Trumpian appeals" made to his voting base (33). The rage incited with an all-caps "WIN" or a degrading tweet labeling his opponent as a "loser" may win votes, but it also turn "political friendship" into political opposition that further displaces oppressed groups (Allen 134). Democratic citizens should be aware and alert to "us vs. them" rhetoric like that of Trump's win/lose rhetoric, recognizing that the writer or speaker is not interested in bolstering democracy if they use such language.

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